

THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATION OF INDO-CHINA

any regard for his feelings. Many puerile and grotesque incidents were the result of this violation of the traditions and rites. The Emperor's personality, always enigmatic and curious, became with time increasingly a prey to sadistic insanity. Unpleasant rumours circulated in Hue about the martyrdoms suffered by the ladies of his Court. Although unverifiable, they were thought to be sufficient ground for invading the sanctity of the palace. The French Resident forced through the Emperor's abdication in 1907, and Thanh Thai went to join the growing group of Annamite Emperors-in-exile. The Annamites were incensed at the French treating their Emperor first like a puppet and then like a child, and they claimed that he had been poisoned. Nor were their feelings soothed to learn of a stupid rifling of the imperial tombs, on the absurd charge that they contained firearms and hidden treasure. Such incidents aggravated their irritation and despair, dreadfully aroused by fiscal vexations, and resulted in the march of the *^h&veux Coupes*. This march, in the beginning, was an unarmed protest which soon became violent and was as brutally suppressed. The colonial government, fearing Parisian reaction, withheld the murderous statistics and claimed that the natives were protesting against mandarinal abuses and not against the French administration. In Tonkin, the trend towards direct administration created friction. Between the traditional mandarin and the juxtaposed French administration, which was steadily sapping their powers and com- >lacently usurping their prestige. The mandarin continued its ^ointless existence because the French administrators were too ignorant

f the country and too inaccessible to the people to
replace them
ffectively. Even the luxury of venaHty was no longer
theirs but the
iterpreters', whose corrupt exploitation of their fellow
countrymen
rtnt unchecked because they were indispensable to the
unilingual
dministrators.

The decline of the ignored and underpaid
mandarinate was most
learly seen in the law courts. Natives were
encouraged to **appeal**
irectly to the Residents, without passing through the
local native
3urts. Because the French magistrates were
overworked and Ignorant
F native law, cases dragged on interminably, at great
expense and to
o equitable verdict. Tax collections and the military
draft were also
aw handled by the French through responsible
Notables, aad tibfe
>mpleted the unt denniniog of that remarkable
instrtuoet of local
>vemment—the Annamite commune. The mandarins
gave tip A6
niggle and, in good Oriental fasMon, pkyed thmr
tramp carf—